



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Applicant Name: The Department of Planning and Development

Address of Proposal: Various sites within the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposal is to change the zoning on approximately 12.5 acres of land in the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village from SF, LR1, LR2, LR2 RC, LR3 RC, NC1-40, and NC2-40 to LR2, LR3, NC1P-40, NC2-40, NC2P-40, NC2P-65, NC3-65, and NC3P-65. The proposal also would establish a Station Area Overlay District around the future Roosevelt light rail station and apply incentive zoning provisions for affordable housing to the areas proposed for rezoning.

The following approval is required:

SEPA - Environmental Conditions - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☐ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Background

In 2005, Sound Transit proposed a future light rail station for the Roosevelt neighborhood under 12th Avenue NE between NE 65th Street and NE 67th Street. Following Sound Transit's decision, the Roosevelt community reviewed and updated its neighborhood plan, which originally was adopted by the City Council in 1999. This review generated proposed amendments that would concentrate residential density and commercial uses around the planned light rail station.

Several goal and policy revisions to the Neighborhood Plan were adopted by amendments to the Neighborhood Plan element of the City's Comprehensive Plan in 2006, all of which supported increased density and commercial uses around the commercial core and the planned light rail station. Changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map also have been adopted by the City Council, redesignating several areas within the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village from Single Family to Multi-Family Residential or Commercial/Mixed Use, and some areas from Multi-Family Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use. The package of rezones currently being proposed is consistent with appropriate zoning designations for the areas that were redesignated on the Future Land Use Map.

Proposal Description

The proposed rezones focus on three general areas within the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village:

- Sector A, North Commercial Core: This includes 11 subareas, all located north of NE 65th Street and west of 12th Avenue NE. The underlying zones proposed for rezone include SF, LR1, LR2, LR2 RC, LR3 RC, and NC2-40. The proposed zones for these subareas are LR3, NC2-40, NC3-65, and NC3P-65.
- Sector B, South/Southeast Roosevelt: This includes eight subareas, east of Roosevelt Way NE between NE 64th Street and NE 66th Street. The underlying zones proposed for rezone include SF, LR1, LR2, LR3 RC, NC1-40, and NC2-40. The proposed zones for these subareas are LR2, NC1P-40, NC2-40, NC2P-40, NC2P-65, and NC3P-65.
- Sector C, Southwest Roosevelt: This includes five subareas, south of NE 65th Street and west of 12th Avenue NE. The underlying zones proposed for rezone include SF, LR2, LR3 RC, and NC2-40. The proposed zones for these subareas are LR3 and NC3-65,

The proposed action also would establish a Station Area Overlay District that includes all commercial and multifamily zoned parcels in the area from north of NE 62nd Street to the four corners of Roosevelt Way NE/NE 70th Street, and from Interstate 5 to 15th Avenue NE. These parcels generally are all within a quarter-mile of the future light rail station, which is scheduled to open in 2020.

The proposal also would enable the application of the City's Incentive Zoning provisions for affordable housing to the Roosevelt area. This action is primarily procedural, enabling the application of the existing Incentive Zoning provisions at the time of the proposed zoning changes, consistent with City policy. As part of these changes, the proposal would adopt new nomenclature for parcels rezoned with Incentive Zoning provisions, and would include a method for establishing a base and a maximum development capacity in zones that do not currently include base and maximum development standards in the Seattle Municipal Code.

Public Comments

Proposed changes to the Land Use Code require City Council approval. Public comment will be taken on the proposed amendments during future Council hearings.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist dated April 15, 2011. The information in the checklist, the Director's Report and Recommendation, a copy of the proposed text changes, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar legislative actions form the basis for this analysis and decision.

Short-term Impacts

As a non-project action, the proposed amendment will not have any short-term impact on the environment. Future development affected by this legislation and subject to SEPA will be required to address short-term impacts on the environment.

Long-term Impacts

Most long-term impacts of this code amendment are expected to be minor. Impacts to noise, light and glare, shadows, energy, air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions), and most public services and facilities may slightly increase, due to larger structures and greater levels of activity on various sites, but are not expected to be substantial. In the Station Area Overlay District, any expansion of more than 12,000 square feet (4,000 square feet in Single Family or Multi Family zones) or the creation of more than 30 dwelling units will be subject to project-level SEPA review, which will allow for more focused review of environmental impacts of individual developments. Outside of the Station Area Overlay District, these thresholds would drop to 4,000 square feet in all zones, and 4 to 8 dwelling units, depending on the zone. In addition, projects expanding under the provision of this code amendment will need to comply with existing codes and regulations, including the Land Use Code, Environmentally Critical Areas regulations, and the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code.

The most likely adverse impacts of the proposed amendment would be to land use; height, bulk, and scale; and traffic and transportation. These topics are discussed further below.

Land Use

The Land Use SEPA policy states, in part, that "it is the City's policy to ensure that proposed uses in development projects are reasonably compatible with surrounding uses and are consistent with any applicable, adopted City land use regulations, the goals and policies set forth in Section B of the land use element of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan regarding Land Use Categories, and the shoreline goals and policies set forth in section D-4 of the land use element of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan for the area in which the project is located". The proposed rezones would not permit any uses that are not currently allowed in the zones that encompass the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village, although on a small number of parcels certain uses (primarily commercial) would be allowed where they are currently prohibited. The proposed establishment of a Station Area Overlay District and extension of the Pedestrian zone would restrict the location of certain commercial uses otherwise allowed in Neighborhood Commercial zones. The uses that would be allowed under the proposed rezones are expected to be reasonably compatible with uses in adjacent zones. No portion of the proposed rezones is within the City's Shoreline District.

Section B-27 of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan identifies the following goals and policies for the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village:

R-LUG1 "Foster development in a way that preserves single-family residentially zoned enclaves and provides appropriate transitions to more dense, or incompatible, uses."

R-LUG2 "Promote the growth of the Roosevelt Urban Village in a manner that concentrates residential and business uses in the commercial core and near the light rail station, with less dense residential, mixed use and commercial development along the commercial arterials that extend from the core."

R-LUG3 "Promote the design of private development and public facilities that protects and enhances public views and vistas."

R-LUP1 "Support a zoning strategy that consolidates similar zoning into whole blocks in and near the urban core and light rail station, to result in more compatible development."

R-LUP2 "Support the infill development of commercial zoned properties that are vacant or underutilized."

R-LUP3 "Promote the development of new multifamily dwellings, in properly zoned areas, that will buffer single-family areas from the commercial core, freeway and commercial corridors."

The proposed rezones broadly support these goals and policies, by primarily increasing densities near the planned light rail station and along the key arterials (NE 65th Street and Roosevelt Way NE). Existing transitions largely are maintained, although "buffer" parcels generally would be a half-block to a block further away from the commercial core. A small number of single-family zoned parcels would be rezoned under these text amendments, to LR3 and NC1P-40. As these parcels already border more intense zones, no single-family enclaves would be disrupted.

The parcels being rezoned will be subject to design review. Design review considers the context and character of surrounding development in applying City design guidelines, thus providing some opportunity to reduce incompatibility between new development proposals and development on adjacent parcels. It is not anticipated that the proposed text amendments will result in significant land use impacts, pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 J.

Height, Bulk, and Scale

In general, height, bulk and scale of projects developing pursuant to the proposed rezones would not be substantially different than what could be built under current zoning. The greatest increases in allowable heights would be on several parcels that would be rezoned from LR2, LR3, and NC2-40 to NC3-65. All of these parcels are adjacent to the existing NC3-65 zoning in the commercial core.

Bulk and scale impacts of projects proposed pursuant to this code amendment will be addressed by the City's design review process, which, as noted above, would apply throughout the areas proposed for rezone. Specific height, bulk and scale impacts of particular projects will be determined at the time of project-specific SEPA review. The text amendments are not expected to have a significant impact on height, bulk, and scale, pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 G.

Transportation

The proposed text amendments will increase development capacity on various parcels in the affected area; projects developing pursuant to these rezones may generate higher volumes of traffic and have greater transportation impacts than projects proposed under the current zoning. The Department of Planning and Development has estimated the development capacity of the areas proposed for rezoning under existing zoning and development capacity under the proposed rezones. Existing zoning has an estimated capacity for an additional 269 residential units and 10,604 square feet of new commercial space, over and above existing development. Under the proposed rezones, the same parcels have an estimated capacity for 617 new residential units and 225,813 square feet of new commercial space. Therefore, the proposed rezones would increase the development capacity of the affected parcels by approximately 348 housing units and 215,209 square feet of commercial space.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers' Trip Generation manual can be used to roughly estimate the likely increases in traffic that would result from this amount of additional development capacity. Actual additional traffic volumes would depend on a number of factors, including the mix of uses that would be proposed both on any individual development site and throughout the rezone area. The Director's Report and Recommendation estimates that the 348 housing units could generate roughly 1,922 additional daily vehicle trips, with approximately 170 of these trips occurring during each of the morning and afternoon peak hours. A conservative mix of office, medical office, and restaurant uses in the commercial space could result in an estimated increase of 11,406 daily vehicle trips, with roughly 1,100 trips occurring during the peak hours. These estimates would result in a total daily additional traffic volume of approximately 13,328 vehicles, with about 1,270 trips occurring during peak hours.

These estimates likely are high for several reasons. Data from the Institute of Transportation Engineers typically are drawn from suburban sites; isolated land uses, auto-centric development patterns, and lack of non-auto modes often lead to very high levels of auto use in such areas, compared to relatively dense, walkable, mixed-use areas such as the Roosevelt neighborhood. Additionally, these estimates do not adjust for the moderately high levels of transit service available in the neighborhood, which will substantially increase following extension of the Sound Transit light rail line and construction of the Roosevelt light rail station in 2020.

The levels of service at certain intersections in the Roosevelt Urban Village were evaluated in the 2006 North Link Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS), prepared by Sound Transit for the construction of the North Link light rail line. The FSEIS includes transportation analyses specific to the Roosevelt area in the vicinity of the proposed rezones. Project PM peak hour level of service was estimated for the year 2030 at three key intersections: NE 65th Street and 8th Avenue NE, NE 65th Street and Roosevelt Way NE, and NE 65th Street and 12th Avenue NE. The intersection of NE 65th Street/8th Avenue NE is forecast to operate at LOS B in 2030; the other two intersections are forecast to operate at LOS C. LOS D is generally considered to be an acceptable intersection level of service in the City of Seattle; compared to this standard, all three intersections are forecast to operate well during the PM peak hour in the year 2030.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan evaluates traffic effects on arterial streets using a system of screenlines. Screenlines aggregate the estimated capacities of groups of arterials; these capacities are compared to counts or estimates of traffic volumes traveling on the arterials. Volume-to-capacity comparisons are made for each direction of travel, and typically evaluate the PM peak hour. Volume-to-capacity ratios below 1.0 indicate that sufficient capacity is available for a given volume of traffic. Two screenlines are located near the proposed rezones, an east-west screenline running south of NE 80th Street from 5th Avenue NE to 15th Avenue NE, and a north-south screenline running east of I-5 from NE 65th Street to NE 80th Street. The most recent transportation concurrency screenline counts indicate that, for each direction of travel, PM peak hour traffic volumes are at least 2,000 vehicles below the directional capacity at each of the two screenlines.

As indicated by the intersection levels of service and screenline data described above, arterials in the Roosevelt Urban Village have sufficient capacity to accommodate moderate levels of growth. The additional traffic volumes that are expected to result from these rezones will be spread across a large number of development sites in the three discrete areas in which rezones are proposed. The additional trips will not be concentrated on any one street or at any single intersection. Given the availability of alternate modes, the dispersion of trips in various areas of the neighborhood, and the available arterial capacity, the proposed rezones are not expected to have a significant impact on traffic and transportation, pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 R. The transportation impacts of individual projects developing pursuant to these proposed text changes will be evaluated through SEPA review at the time of permit applications; if appropriate, mitigation will be required at that time.

Station Area Overlay District

Application of a Station Area Overlay District to portions of the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village is not expected to have any impacts beyond those associated with the accompanying rezones (described above). The primary effect of the Station Area Overlay District will be to prohibit certain uses within the Overlay District. This is expected to create a more transit- and pedestrian-friendly environment, which could result in some trips being made by transit or on foot instead of driving. To the extent this occurs, the forecasts of additional vehicular traffic described above would be overestimated, and resulting transportation impacts would be slightly less.

As part of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy (NBDS) enacted in 2006, minimum parking requirements were eliminated in Station Area Overlay Districts. Potential transportation impacts, including parking impacts, in all of the city's commercial zones and station areas were addressed in the SEPA analysis of Land Use Code amendments that were part of the NBDS. This proposal does not include any changes to the parking provisions implemented through the NBDS, although it establishes a Station Area Overlay District in the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village. Projects and developments pursuant to these text amendments will be subject to environmental review, if they exceed SEPA thresholds. Application of the Station Area Overlay District provisions of the Land Use Code is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts.

Incentive Zoning

The text amendments proposed for the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village include an application of the Incentive Zoning provisions of the Land Use Code. Where applied, these provisions allow additional development capacity to be achieved if projects participate in an incentive zoning program to increase affordable housing. Projects participating in the incentive zoning program would not gain extra height, but could add floor area beyond the base Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in their zone. The additional floor area could result in somewhat larger structures on certain parcels. The Incentive Zoning provisions will not affect parcels that are not redeveloped, nor those that are redeveloped only to the base FAR. As noted above, bulk and scale impacts of projects proposed pursuant to this code amendment will be addressed by the City's design review process. Specific height, bulk and scale impacts of particular projects will be determined at the time of project-specific SEPA review. These code amendments are not expected to result in significant height, bulk, and scale impacts.

In addition to application of the incentive zoning provisions to the Roosevelt Urban Village, these text amendments would establish a method for activating Incentive Zoning provisions at the time of any rezone action. This method would estimate an amount of base development that could be achieved in any zone, based on the allowable FAR in that zone. When a rezone to a higher intensity zone occurs, developers may build to all the development standards of the new zone, but any gross floor area developed beyond the amount allowed by the old zones FAR is subject to Incentive Zoning provisions. Additionally, these text amendments propose a land use map notation that would display the new zone designation, as well as a notation of the old zone's FAR maximum, to identify the base development amount. As single-family zones do not include FAR ratios, the legislation proposes a 0.75 FAR proxy for parcels in single-family zones, solely for the purposes of the Incentive Zoning provisions. These proposed methods would facilitate implementation of the Incentive Zoning program already authorized by the Land Use Code; they would not modify the Incentive Zoning provisions or, except for the Roosevelt Urban Village as described above, apply the Incentive Zoning provisions in any particular neighborhood. As such, these portions of the proposed legislation are not expected to have any adverse impacts on the environment.

Conclusion

The proposed code amendments to modify zoning in three areas of the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village, to establish a Station Area Overlay District around the future Roosevelt light rail station, and to apply Incentive Zoning provisions for affordable housing are not expected to have significant adverse impacts. The allowed height, bulk, and scale of development on the affected parcels is not expected to substantially increase over what is allowed by current zoning. Design review will be required of projects over the size threshold, reducing potential height, bulk, and scale impacts. Increased trips will be spread across the existing network of arterials in the Roosevelt neighborhood, reducing impacts on any one corridor; additionally, existing and future transit service and the mixed-use nature of the area are likely to reduce levels of auto traffic from development projects in the rezoned areas. Developments over the SEPA threshold will be subject to project-level SEPA review; mitigation based on that review would further reduce impacts from projects developing pursuant to these code amendments.

DECISION – SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.

[] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS – SEPA

None.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: April 21, 2011
John Shaw, Land Use Planning and Development Analyst
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